

A Story of a WWII Soldier, Told Through Short Snorter Banknotes

By
Anil Bohora
bohoraa@yahoo.com



Short Snorter Banknotes

- A short snorter is a banknote which was inscribed by various people traveling together or meeting at different events and records who they met and other information
- The tradition was started by Bush Pilots in Alaska in the 1920's and subsequently spread through the growth of military & commercial aviation
- During World War II soldiers would take the local currency & sign each other's banknotes creating a keepsake souvenir
- If you signed a short snorter & that person could not produce it upon request, they owed you a dollar or a drink

You can get additional information about the short snorter banknotes at <http://www.shortsnoter.org> , an excellent web site, maintained by Mr. Tom Sparks

Got a Set of Short Snorters

- I got a set of banknotes, which included some short snorters, which are from an unknown soldier from WWII
- I have spent numerous hours researching information related to these banknotes, people & places they relate to
- I have tried to piece together a story of a journey of this soldier through these short snorter banknotes
- The numismatic value of this set of banknotes was less than US\$10, but **the human story it tells is priceless**



The Beginning of Our Solder's Story

- The story of this soldier begins sometime in 1943
- He must have left from the east coast of the USA for his tour of duty in the farthest corner of the world, Rangoon, Burma
- Let us Start



Banknote 1: Algeria 5 Francs dated 16.11.1942 Issued by Allied Occupation Forces

Date: November 30, 1943

Value Identified As:

5 Francs = \$0.10

Text: Received in Oran, Africa Nov 30, 1943 at Marignan (Name of Café)
(Joe's Place)

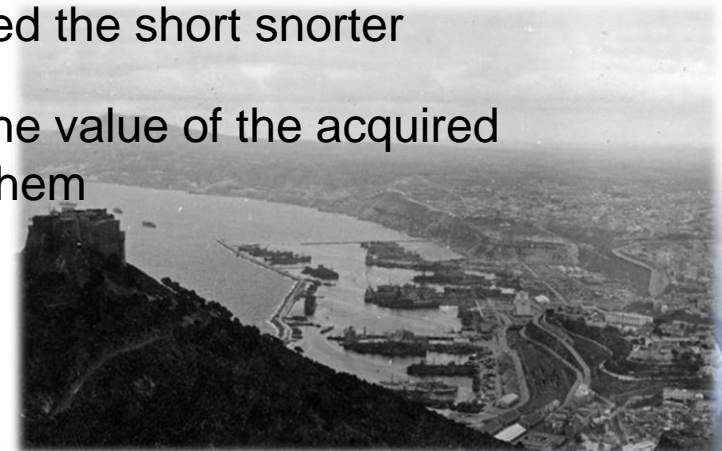
Signatures/People Named:

- Cpl. Carl E. Solarz
- Pvt. George Costello
- Cpl. Donald Smith
- Cpl. Julio Montesino
- Cpl. R. E. Hall
- Cpl. W. P. Graham



Banknote 1 Story

- The first short snorter we have is 5 Francs from Algeria
- Our soldier receives it in Oran, Algeria in a Café named Marignan
- Oran is an important port city located in the north-west of Algeria
- Oran was part of the Operation Torch, the British-American invasion of French North Africa during the North African Campaign of the WWII in November 1942
- Our soldier passed through Oran about a year after Operation Torch, and had a good time with friends who signed the short snorter
- Our soldier diligently wrote the dates and the value of the acquired banknotes in US\$ at the time of receiving them



Banknote 2: Algeria 20 Francs dated 3.12.1942

Date: December 5, 1943

Value Identified As:

4,191 Francs = \$83.52

Text: Received in first payment arrives December 5, 1943 in North Africa.

Signatures/People Named:

- Ray Stapleton
- Stanley Pietak or Pietrak
- W. W. Wilson
- Carl Nabb
- Jack Gordon
- Albert Flh?delor Lafayette, Sr.

Back of banknote

- Big. Ed Newbury
- NY Son Huther or Hunter
- a. J. D??slk, Texas
- Ray Hester K. C. Mo [=Kansas City, Missouri]



Banknote 2 Story

- The second short snorter we have is 20 Francs from Algeria
- He has received this banknote as a part of his first salary
- As identified by him, the total salary he had received was US\$83.52 in today's value it will be about US\$1,200
- Again, many of his friends, as identified, have signed the short snorter including Ray Hester of Kansas City, Missouri Ray died in 2013. His real name was Archer Conrad Hester. Other information online confirms that he was an Army Air Corps veteran of WWII. His grave record can be found at

<https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=134011077&ref=acom>

Banknote 3: Great Britain, British Military Authority, 2 Shillings 6 Pence Issued in 1943

Date: January 26, 1944

Value Identified As: None

Text: Exchanged with British sailor (Jones) in Port of Aden, Arabia At Arabia 1/26/44

Signatures/People Named:

- None



Banknote 3 Story

- As our soldier moves along his long voyage, he reaches the famed Port of Aden
- The Colony of Aden was a British Colony from 1937 to 1963 consisting of the port of Aden and its immediate surroundings
- Prior to 1937, Aden had been governed as part of British India subordinated to the Bombay Presidency
- At Aden our soldier meets many of his British counterparts
- Here he gets a 2 Shillings 6 Pence banknote issued by British Military Authority from a British sailor named Jones in exchange
- FYI: Dhirubhai Ambani started his career in Aden & his son Mukesh was born there



Banknote 4: India, 1 Rupee 1940

Date: February 1, 1944

Value Identified As:

1 Rupee = \$0.32

Text: Received in first pay at
Bombay, India. Feb. 1, 1944

Signatures/People Named:

- None



Banknote 4 Story

- The fourth banknote is 1 Rupee banknote issued by Government of India with a picture of King George VI
- Our soldier receives it as a part of his first pay at Bombay (now called “Mumbai”), India
- Our soldier diligently wrote the going foreign exchange rate of the day as 1 Rupee = US\$0.32
- Indian Rupee has depreciate substantially since those days. The current exchange rate is 1 Rupee = US\$0.01



Banknote 5: Burma, ¼ Rupee 1942

- The last banknote in the set is not a short snorter, but a Japanese invasion currency issued by the Japanese Military Authority to be used in Burma
- The Japanese invaded Burma in January 1942
- The Japanese held Burma until the second Allied Burma Campaign of 1944-45.

This is the time (after February 1944) our soldier was travelling to Rangoon, Burma and must have been part of this campaign, liberating Burma!



Japanese Government notes litter the ground at Rangoon, 1945

More Details

- The group who signed these short snorters belonged to Cpl. Carl E. Golarz based on the position of his name on the 5 Franc Algeria banknote and similarities in the handwriting
- Most American units in China-Burma-India Theater were Army Air Corps, this information corroborates with the information provided on his grave marker. He was enlisted in June 1943.

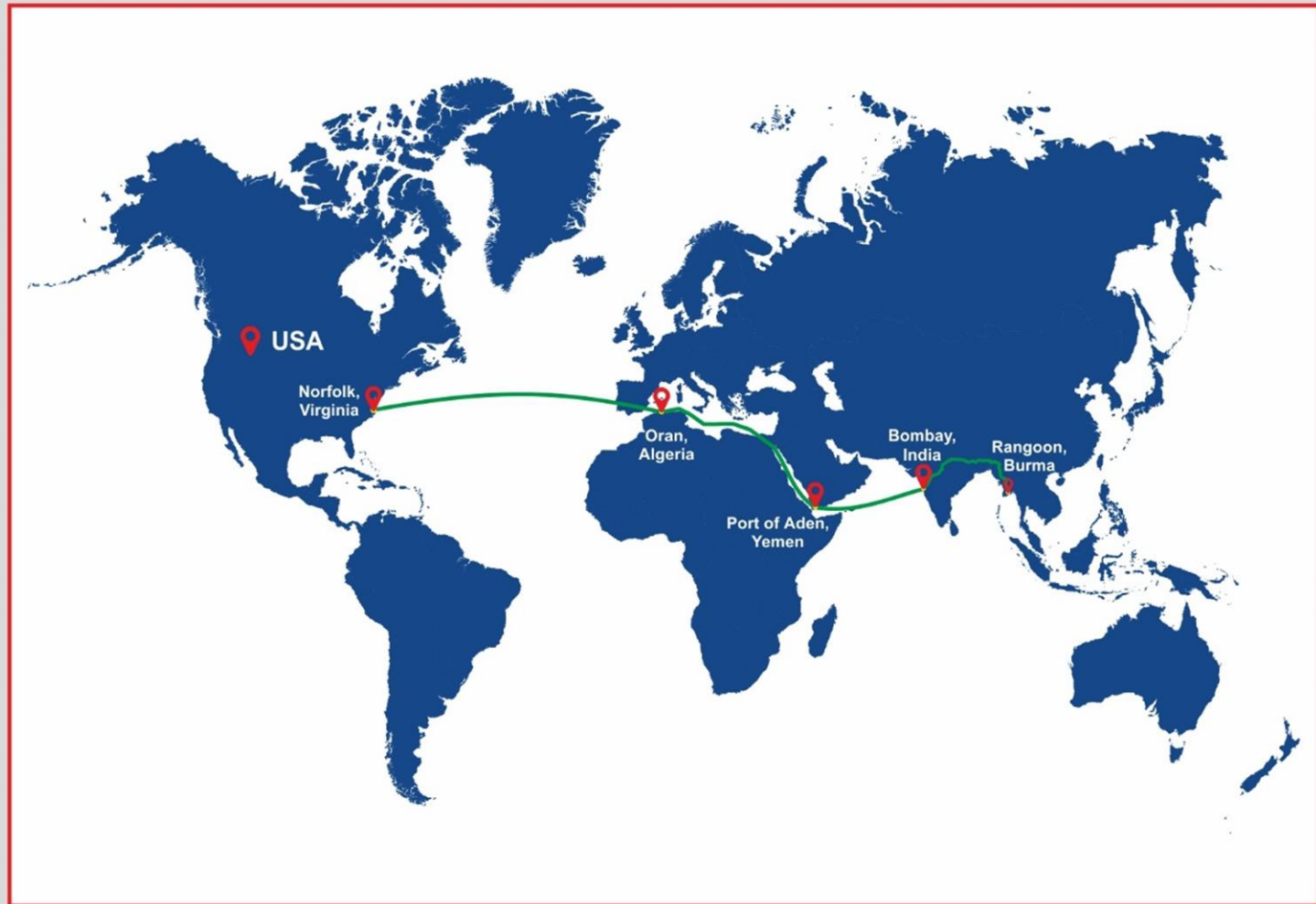
A link to his grave marker: <https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSI=golarz&GSfn=carl&GSmn=e&GSbyrel=all&GSdyrel=all&GSob=n&GRid=36773529&df=all&>

- The grave marker for Cpl. Julio Montesino who also appears on the Algeria 5 Franc banknote indicates he was in the 60th Fighter Squadron, 33rd Fighter Group. The movements of this group are consistent with the progression of the banknotes ending in China-Burma-India Theater. Since Golarz did not join the unit until late 1943 there are no banknotes from when the unit was engaged in Europe

A link to his grave marker: <https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSI=montesino&GSfn=julio&GSmn=+&GSbyrel=all&GSdyrel=all&GSob=n&GRid=36495824&df=all&>



The Map of the Journey



The Story !!!

The Journey !!!

- A story of an American soldier starting his journey from the USA to be part of Allied Forces who liberated Burma from Japanese invasion
- What a story!!!
- What a journey!!!
- How banknotes and short snorters can talk to us!!!!

